

ATTACHMENT A

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To the Honorable Judge McElroy

I stand before you today a broken man. I am truly ashamed of what brings me before you in your courtroom today. Not a day goes by that I don't regret my actions and the pain that it has caused so many people. For this I am truly sorry to all people involved in the process. I know that I am not the person described on a piece of paper, I am better than that, and I am better than what I did to find myself before you. I have promised my parents that I will work hard until my last day on earth to become a better person and make them proud. I have spent countless hours reflecting on myself and what caused me to make the mistakes I have made in my life. A complex set of life events and history have unfortunately led me to act in the manner that I have. I want you to know the real person that stands before. But I also hope to show that I am beginning the long process of inward reflection to understand the causes of my behavior. Understanding these will help me to prevent myself from making mistakes in the future.

I was raised the only child of two loving parents, their 'Christmas Miracle'. They always bestowed upon me the importance of doing the right thing. Standing up for others, being a kind hearted caring individual, and staying away from drugs and alcohol. As a young person I was attached at the hip to my great grandfather who was in his 80's. The day that I was born, he quit a lifetime of smoking so that he would be a part of my life for as long as he could. I followed him around his garden, helped him mow the lawn, and watched wrestling on TV with him; he was the best friend I've ever had. The devotion that he showed me stays with me every single day knowing just how deeply I mattered. He taught me to be kind, to care for others, and that love is a powerful thing. His death, when I was only in fifth grade, unquestionably broke my heart; from which I don't know that I have ever fully healed from.

From that point forward nothing was ever the same. I later found myself with divorced parents, struggling to keep both sides happy during the holidays, and spending equal time with each. A tall task for any teenager. Through it all though, I managed to hold true to the promise I made my parents that I would never delve into alcohol or drugs. However, what nobody could have possibly prepared me for is how outcasted I would become. As I went through High School, I found myself increasingly more isolated and left out because I didn't involve myself in drugs or alcohol. Friends would go their separate ways, invitations to hang out would dry up, and most people looking for relationships wouldn't bother to hang out with the kid who was 'too good for that stuff'. In a sense, doing the right thing seemed to make my life worse, something I had trouble understanding and grasping.

2 I thankfully had my outlet of racing dirtbikes to help carry me through those years. Racing dirtbikes didn't require teammates, I was on my own on the track and my success was completely up to me putting in the work to succeed. My family didn't fully accept my choosing this as my passion, as when I was younger I had a very successful athletic career prior to racing dirtbikes, but I never knew how to articulate as to WHY this is what made me happy. I didn't want them to know I was an outcast. Unfortunately, my chosen path also lead me to a string of serious of injuries that I would not fully understand the severity of until much later in my life.

As a kid and teenager, I suffered a handful of concussions from, but on the dirtbike I had crashes that lead to blackout situations, blurred vision, sickness and other concussion related symptoms over thirty times. I also snowboarded which lead to a many head injuries from severe crashes. During this time that my behavior became more erratic and eventually lead me to legal troubles.

I say these things not as an attempt for sympathy, but to show an understanding of WHY I ended up in the situation where I find myself before you. I was always in denial that I had a mental health condition, I refused to take medicine even though I had some prescribed to me, I denied that anything was wrong with me, and I often refused to go to doctors for fear of any diagnosis that would make me feel fragile and mortal. Unfortunately, it took my coming to jail to fully embrace and acknowledge that this is the case. I realized that because of my past it was hard to be the real me without people stereotyping me or labeling me. I handled this poorly by withdrawing from the people who care about me in my life and turning to the internet where I could be the real me without my name attached. The internet became a place where it was safe to be myself, but I used the internet later in an improper way. I cannot change the past; erase the injuries, change decisions I have made, or reverse time to make myself more socially accepted; but from hereon out I CAN fix the things under my control. Embracing that there is something wrong is the first step in a long road to recovery. Now that I know WHAT is wrong, I can work on the path to prevention and intervention.

I know that I need help. I need help in many ways that prison will not provide. While I know that prison is an unquestioned reality of this situation, I need help beyond prison. I haven't had the best support from the programs provided through the legal system in the past. Probation officers ignored my needs, and seemed to lack an understanding of my situation. I would merely go through the motions and hide all emotion rather than asking for help that I knew would only bring trouble even in non-illegal situations. Therapy provided through the court was unproductive, as it was mostly group sessions that one person would monopolize talking about unrelated issues. While one on one therapy was helped me, I was told to do what I was told and go to group instead of continuing with what was working.

3 I have always wanted to live a proper life, but I have felt the burden of fighting against the legal system every step of the way. Sex offender registry since I was a teenager has served to only create more barriers for fixing my life. The registry was created for public safety means, but it has served as a scarlet letter blocking future opportunities and success. I was able to achieve a successful college career but this was not without significant hurdles I had to jump over. Having to constantly fight for normalcy is not easy on anyone, especially a teenager. Eventually I just gave up fighting to prove I am not what they have tried to say I am.

Drug, alcohol, and people in my situation all operate from the same part of the brain. They all release the same endorphins to the person when they are going through their process and should all be treated with the same type of treatment in a clinical setting. If you continue to shame a drug addict for their past, make their life harder to live a clean life, and create never ending barriers toward success, it is almost a guarantee they will relapse. That is what happened to me. I have not had a stable mental health situation due to my concussions and repeated refusal to take medication until my arrest. I had barriers and a scarlet letter from my past, a sisyphian battle to create a promising future, and I had severe depression from life situations that I did not handle properly. I have never been a quitter, and I am ashamed to admit I quit battling for a successful future and now stand before you. I am ashamed that I hurt people in the process. My parents will have to see me possibly for the rest of their life in prison, and that I have stolen the years I should be helping them and supporting them away.

Since day one while I was sitting in custody, I accepted what I had done. I admitted to it to the officers in charge of my case while sitting in their vehicle. By entering a plea, I continue to own my wrong decisions and hold myself responsible. There is no need to have a trial and put the victim through that process; doing so would only further extend the wrong I have done.

I have done plenty wrong in my life both legally speaking and morally speaking. But I have also done a lot of good. As a child, I skipped opening birthday and Christmas presents, opting instead to spend the holiday/birthday delivering meals to the elderly, disabled and people in need of company during the loneliness of the holiday. This was very important to me, as deep down, I worried that it may be me in their shoes one day and I would hope that someone would reciprocate that kindness to me. I have also made it a point in my life to do good things even when nobody else is looking. Those are the most important types of charity because you are truly doing it for the right reasons, not to post on Facebook or show everyone what you did, but because it was the RIGHT thing to do. When I would see locals at the race tracks riding around without proper protective gear, I would donate gear right out of my bag to them. When I would encounter homeless people in a city I was traveling to I would buy them a group of them dinner and a case of water. When a stray dog found its way to me from the woods I

would help her find a forever home and help pay for her medical needs. I do these things because I was taught by my great grandfather who had a huge heart; and I carry on by being the man he showed me to be. I am not the monster that I have been painted as. I am a human, a son, a grandson, and a flawed person all the same. I will continue to work diligently toward a better future that will not involve my going back to jail. I am not the person that you read on a docket sheet. I am truly a good person who has made bad mistakes, I know that I will have to balance bad with good acts in the future and I will, as I have always done. But most importantly, I have begun the process of learning how to prevent this from ever happening again. I humbly ask not just for your leniency in this matter, but to see the whole picture of who I am as I stand before you. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Nicholas Sannicandro
